

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

I. Amendments to the Claims

Claims 2-5, 12, 13, 16, 17, 21 and 27 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Further, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 4 and 5, independent claim 11 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 12 and 13, independent claim 15 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 16 and 17, independent claim 19 has been amended to include limitations similar to those recited in claims 4 and 5, and independent claims 28 and 29 have also been amended to include limitations similar to those recited in claims 4 and 5.

In addition, dependent claims 6 and 20 have been amended to remain consistent with their respective base claims.

It is also noted that claims 1, 11, 15, 19, 20, 28 and 29 have been amended to make a number of editorial revisions thereto. These editorial revisions have been made to place the claims in better U.S. form. Further, these editorial revisions have not been made to narrow the scope of protection of the claims, or to address issues related to patentability, and therefore, these amendments should not be construed as limiting the scope of equivalents of the claimed features offered by the Doctrine of Equivalents.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5, 6, 8, 13, and 17 were identified by the Examiner as being allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

As mentioned above, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 4 and 5, which were identified by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter.

Further, as mentioned above, independent claim 11 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 12 and 13, which were identified by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter.

In addition, independent claim 15 has been amended to include the subject matter of claims 16 and 17, which were identified by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter.

Finally, independent claims 19, 28 and 29 have also been amended to include subject that is similar to that of claims 4 and 5, which were identified by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter.

Accordingly, in view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter as discussed above, it is submitted that amended independent claims 1, 11, 15, 19, 28 and 29 and claims 6-8, 10, 14, 18, 20 and 23-26 that depend therefrom are allowable.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejections

Claims 1-4, 7, 10-12, 14-16 and 18-21 and 23-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of Franklin, Boykin, Stefik and Nagel. This

rejection is considered moot in view of the above-mentioned amendments to independent claims 1, 11, 15, 19, 28 and 29 to include allowable subject matter. As a result, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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